



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

**Non-Precedent Decision of the
Administrative Appeals Office**

In Re: 17643831

Date: AUG. 11, 2021

Appeal of Nebraska Service Center Decision

Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker (Advanced Degree, Exceptional Ability, National Interest Waiver)

The Petitioner, a dentist and entrepreneur, seeks second preference immigrant classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree, as well as a national interest waiver of the job offer requirement attached to this EB-2 classification. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act) section 203(b)(2), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2).

The Director of the Nebraska Service Center denied the petition, concluding that the Petitioner qualified for classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree but that the Petitioner had not established that a waiver of the required job offer, and thus of the labor certification, would be in the national interest.

In these proceedings, it is the Petitioner's burden to establish eligibility for the requested benefit. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Upon *de novo* review, we will dismiss the appeal.

I. LAW

To establish eligibility for a national interest waiver, a petitioner must first demonstrate qualification for the underlying EB-2 visa classification, as either an advanced degree professional or an individual of exceptional ability in the sciences arts or business. Because this classification requires that the individual's services be sought by a U.S. employer, a separate showing is required to establish that a waiver of the job offer requirement is in the national interest.

Section 203(b) of the Act sets out this sequential framework:

- (2) Aliens who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability. –
 - (A) In general. – Visas shall be made available . . . to qualified immigrants who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or their equivalent or who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business, will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy,

cultural or educational interests, or welfare of the United States, and whose services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business are sought by an employer in the United States.

(B) Waiver of job offer –

- (i) National interest waiver. . . . the Attorney General may, when the Attorney General deems it to be in the national interest, waive the requirements of subparagraph (A) that an alien’s services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business be sought by an employer in the United States.

While neither the statute nor the pertinent regulations define the term “national interest,” we set forth a framework for adjudicating national interest waiver petitions in the precedent decision *Matter of Dhanasar*, 26 I&N Dec. 884 (AAO 2016).¹ *Dhanasar* states that, after a petitioner has established eligibility for EB-2 classification, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may, as a matter of discretion, grant a national interest waiver if the petitioner demonstrates: (1) that the foreign national’s proposed endeavor has both substantial merit and national importance; (2) that the foreign national is well positioned to advance the proposed endeavor; and (3) that, on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification.

The first prong, substantial merit and national importance, focuses on the specific endeavor that the foreign national proposes to undertake. The endeavor’s merit may be demonstrated in a range of areas such as business, entrepreneurialism, science, technology, culture, health, or education. In determining whether the proposed endeavor has national importance, we consider its potential prospective impact.

The second prong shifts the focus from the proposed endeavor to the foreign national. To determine whether he or she is well positioned to advance the proposed endeavor, we consider factors including, but not limited to: the individual’s education, skills, knowledge and record of success in related or similar efforts; a model or plan for future activities; any progress towards achieving the proposed endeavor; and the interest of potential customers, users, investors, or other relevant entities or individuals.

The third prong requires the petitioner to demonstrate that, on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification. In performing this analysis, USCIS may evaluate factors such as: whether, in light of the nature of the foreign national’s qualifications or the proposed endeavor, it would be impractical either for the foreign national to secure a job offer or for the petitioner to obtain a labor certification; whether, even assuming that other qualified U.S. workers are available, the United States would still benefit from the foreign national’s contributions; and whether the national interest in the foreign national’s contributions is sufficiently urgent to warrant forgoing the labor certification process. In each case, the factor(s)

¹ In announcing this new framework, we vacated our prior precedent decision, *Matter of New York State Department of Transportation*, 22 I&N Dec. 215 (Act. Assoc. Comm’r 1998) (*NYSDOT*).

considered must, taken together, indicate that on balance, it would be beneficial to the United States to waive the requirements of a job offer and thus of a labor certification.²

II. ANALYSIS

The Director found that the Petitioner qualifies as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree. Although the Director found substantial merit in the proposed endeavor in the field of dentistry, the Director concluded that the record does not establish that the Beneficiary's endeavor has national importance. The Director also stated that "the [P]etitioner did not sufficiently describe the entrepreneurial nature of his endeavor in order for [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] to determine whether the [P]etitioner's entrepreneurial plans have substantial merit." The Director also concluded the record did not satisfy the second and third *Dhanasar* prongs. For the reasons discussed below, the Petitioner has not established that a waiver of the requirement of a job offer is warranted.

The record contains limited information regarding the proposed endeavor. The Petitioner initially described the endeavor as "employment as a doctor and the [*sic*] researcher in the field of dentistry, more specifically dental implantology." In response to the Director's notice of intent to deny (NOID), the Petitioner generally described the endeavor as "provid[ing] expertise in the dental field." The Petitioner further stated:

[My] innovative research will contribute to studies related to the nature and basis of implant failure. [My] development and implementation of a unique and effective method allows the examination and obtainment of a much more detailed perspective due to the technique of in vivo whole cell recordings, thus enabling further discoveries related to mechanisms underlining layers of bone.

The Petitioner did not elaborate clarify the method he would develop and implement. Although the Petitioner also asserted in response to the NOID that he "is well-qualified to provide educational lectures on oral hygiene and train professionals in the field, thereby expanding the workforce," he did not specifically state that the endeavor would entail doing so.

In the decision, the Director concluded the record does not establish that the proposed endeavor has national importance, observing that the record does not contain "sufficient evidence to establish that [the Petitioner's] particular endeavor within the field of dentistry and implantology has broad implications beyond the benefits he would provide to his own clients/patients."

On appeal, the Petitioner resubmits, in relevant part, essentially verbatim language from pages 7-9 of his brief in response to the NOID regarding whether the proposed endeavor has substantial merit and national importance. Both briefs reference the Petitioner's experience. The briefs also cite reports of a shortage of both capable dental workers and access to affordable dental care in the United States, in general. The Petitioner reiterates that oral health may be related to other health problems, such as cardiovascular disease.

² See *Dhanasar*, 261 I&N Dec. at 888-91, for elaboration on these three prongs.

In determining national importance, the relevant question is not the importance of the industry, field, or profession in which an individual will work; instead, to assess national importance, we focus on the “specific endeavor that the foreign national proposes to undertake.” *See Dhanasar*, 26 I&N Dec. at 889. *Dhanasar* provided examples of endeavors that may have national importance, as required by the first prong, having “national or even global implications within a particular field, such as those resulting from certain improved manufacturing processes or medical advances” and endeavors that have broader implications, such as “significant potential to employ U.S. workers or has other substantial positive economic effects, particularly in an economically depressed area.” *Id.* at 889-90.

The proposed endeavor of working in a dental facility to provide expert advice and treatment to patients benefits the patients of that facility; however, the record does not establish how the endeavor would have broader implications in terms of significant potential to employ U.S. workers or have substantial positive economic effects, beyond the Petitioner’s unspecified employer, as contemplated by the first *Dhanasar* prong. *See Dhanasar*, 26 I&N Dec. at 889. Petitioners bear the burden of articulating how they satisfy eligibility criteria. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The Petitioner’s statements on appeal regarding his expertise and prior career accomplishments in Libya do not address how the proposed endeavor in the United States has broader implications beyond his immediate employer and patients. Moreover, the Petitioner’s focus on appeal on the importance of the dental industry, and generalized shortages, do not address aspects of the specific endeavor and how the performance of the planned activities under the endeavor would have broader implications, rising to the level of national importance as contemplated by *Dhanasar*. *See id.*

In summation, the Petitioner has not established that the proposed endeavor has national importance, as required by the first *Dhanasar* prong, and therefore is not eligible for a national interest waiver. We reserve our opinion regarding whether the record satisfies the second or third *Dhanasar* prong.

III. CONCLUSION

As the Petitioner has not met the requisite first prong of the *Dhanasar* analytical framework, we conclude that the Petitioner has not established eligibility for, or otherwise merits, a national interest waiver as a matter of discretion.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.